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When this unfortunately takes place, that children or others are known to have eaten of the berries, the most speedy means should be resorted to in order to clear the stomach; for this purpose the stomach-pump is the most effectual and surest remedy. Emetics seldom, in this case, excite the stomach to repulsive action, as fourteen grains of tartrate of antimony have been administered without producing any good effect. Vinegar, contrary to Ray and others, should never be given so long as any of the belladonna is in the stomach, as, instead of abating, it heightens its power. Vinegar is exceedingly useful at a later period, in combating the secondary or depressing effects. And in the case of the friar mentioned by Ray, it is highly probable that the belladonna had, by some means or other, been cleared out of the stomach before the friar got the draught of vinegar.

2. *Atropa frutescens* is a native of Spain, and rises with a shrubby stem to the height of six or eight feet; but the flowers are never succeeded by berries in Great Britain or Ireland. The flowers are of a dirty yellow colour, with a few brown stripes.

3. *Atropa herbacea* is a native of Campeachy. The flowers are white, and come out from between the leaves on short foot-stalks. It flowers in July and August, but seldom ripens its fruit in this country.

4. *Atropa mandragora*, the *mandrake*,\* is another species, still more dangerous than the *atropa belladonna*, as being more sudden in its operation. It is found in many parts of Europe, especially in the Grecian Islands, where it is very common. It has been distinguished into male and female; the male mandrake has a very large root. It is largest at the top or head, and thence gradually grows smaller. Sometimes it is single, but more frequently it is parted into two; when thus parted, it is said to resemble the body and thighs of a mare. This circumstance, joined to its poisonous qualities, gave it, in the days of ignorance and superstition, the reputation of being endowed with animal feeling. The roots were said to shriek when torn from the earth; and it was accounted very dangerous and unlucky to disturb them. And even in our own time, the young Greeks, according to Sibthorp, carry small pieces of the root about them as love-charms. This very remarkable plant has no apparent stem, but its long hairy leaves rise, as it were, from the ground, broadest at the middle, and obtusely pointed at the end; they are a foot or more in length, and about five inches in breadth, of a dusky and disagreeable green colour, and of a very fetid smell. The female mandrake perfectly resembles the other in growth, but the leaves are longer and narrower, and of a darker colour, as are also the seeds and roots. It grows naturally in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Levant.

The three last species are propagated by seeds, and placed in stoves when reared in this country.

The belladonna has long been admitted into the pharmacopœias of this country, being employed in the form of dried leaves, or of an extract. In a small dose it quickens the action of the heart; in larger doses, though a stimulating action is first produced, yet in a short time a *sedative* effect of a very powerful kind ensues.

*Ballymena.*

J. G.

#### THE MAY-POLE.

We have now reached that period of the year which was formerly dedicated to one of the most splendid and pleasing of our festal rites. The observance of MAY-DAY was a custom which, until the close of the reign of James the First, alike attracted the attention of the Royal and the Noble, as of the vulgar class; and there was scarcely a village in the kingdom but what had a *May-pole*, with its appropriate games and dances.

The origin of these festivities has been attributed to three different sources—*Classic*, *Celtic*, and *Gothic*. The first appears to establish the best claim to the parentage of our May-day rites, as a relique of the *Roman Floralia*,

which were celebrated on the last four days of April, and on the first of May, in honour of the Goddess Flora, and were accompanied with dancing, music, the wearing of gurlands, strewing of flowers, &c. The *Beltein*, or rural sacrifice of the Highlanders on this day, as described by Pennant and Dr. Jamieson, seems to have arisen from a different motive, and to have been instituted for the purpose of propitiating the various noxious animals which might injure or destroy their flocks and herds. The Gothic anniversary on May-day makes a nearer approach to the general purpose of the *Floralia*, and was intended as a thanksgiving to the Sun, if not for the return of flowers, fruit, and grain, yet for the introduction of a better season for fishing and hunting.

It was considered as the boundary day that divides the confines of winter and summer, allusively to which there was instituted a sportful war between two parties; the one, in defence of the continuance of winter, the other for bringing in the summer. The youths were divided into troops, the one in winter livery, the other in the gay habit of spring. The mock-battle was always fought booty; the spring was sure to obtain the victory, which they celebrated by carrying triumphantly green branches with many flowers, proclaiming and singing the song of joy, of which the burden was in these or equivalent terms:—"We have brought the summer home."

With these, the simplest modes of celebrating the rites of May-day, was anciently united the *Morris-dance*, consisting of several characters, which were often varied, both in number, application, and dress. The *Morris* dance is without doubt derived from the *Morisco*, a dance peculiar to the Moors, and generally termed the *Spanish Morisco*, from its notoriety in Spain during the dynasty of that people in the Peninsula. The *Morris-dance* in this country usually consisted of the Lady of the May, the Fool, or domestic buffoon of the 15th and 16th centuries, a Piper, and two, four, or more, *Morris-dancers*. They were originally dressed as Moors with blacked faces, but their habit came afterwards to any species of suitable fantastic dress; and their business was to dance round the May-pole.

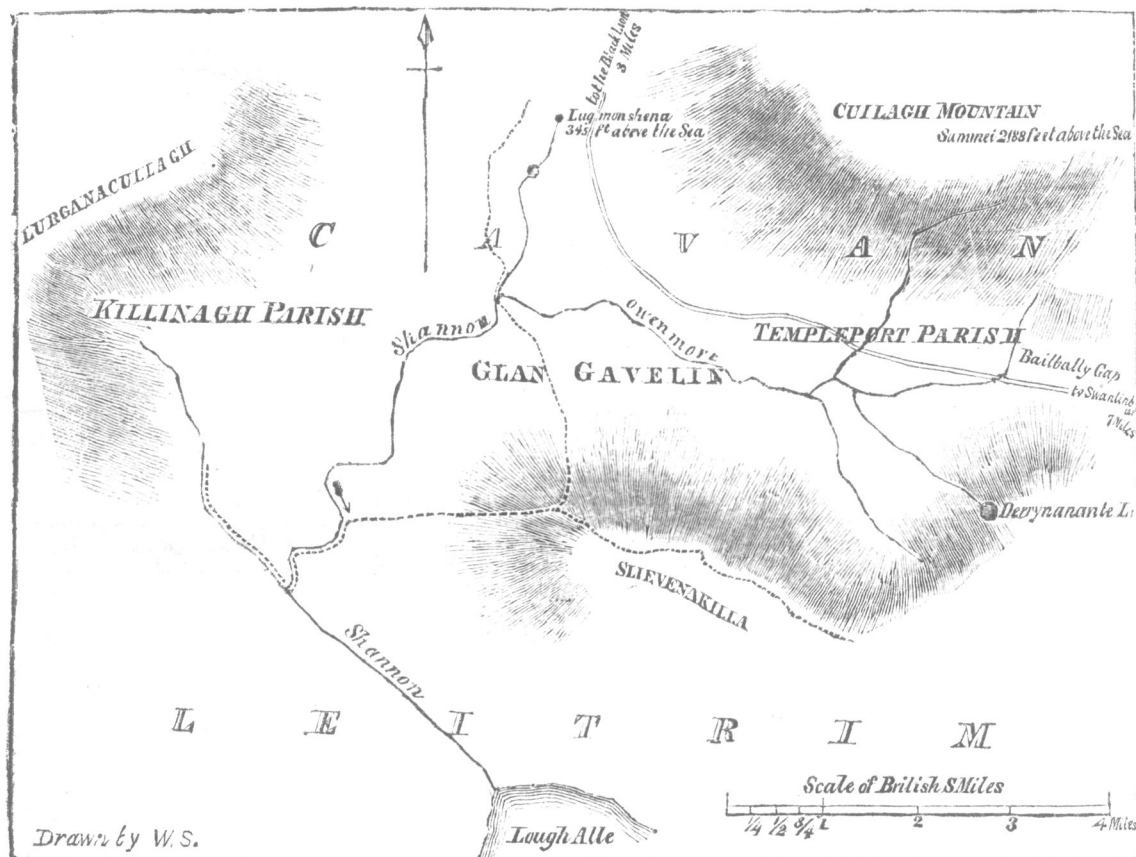
#### PORTRAIT OF A RADICAL.

The following very graphic description we copy from a late American paper—"A Radical is a civil fanatic; a Utopian legislator, who builds constitutions in the air, and shapes them with his fancy, as fools do figures in the clouds. He is but a nominal politician; a faithful subject to an ideal government, but a rebel to a real one. Not having wit enough to distinguish between speculation and practice, he throws away the substance, and grasps at the shadow. He contrives very judiciously what might be, and what ought to be, if Providence were but as wise as himself. He follows his own inclination to a form of government, as a bowler follows his bowl when he mistakes the ground, and screws his body the way he would have it run. He forgets that constitutions grow like trees, and fancies they are built like houses. He reduces men to subjection by proving their equality. His constitutions are idiots, who never can be admitted to the management of their own estates, because they never arrive at years of discretion. He is a state empiric, who has nostrums for the maladies of all government; but, being ignorant of their frame, he cannot proportion the dose. He is wonderfully enamoured of a commonwealth, because it is like a common woman, whom every man may solicit; but he hates a monarchy, because it is like an honest wife, true to one. His service to the people is like that of the idolatrous priests to Bel and the Dragon—to eat up their meat and drink up their liquor for them. When he begs a subscription, he is like an Indian juggler who extracts money from his throat. Upon the hustings, or in the chair, he will hold any argument rather than his tongue, which is like a street bagpipe that never stops its drone while the performer can squeeze wind out of its gullet, or cash out of the hearers' fobs. His oratory is the most difficult to cure of all diseases; he drowns you with it as a water spaniel makes a duck dive at its barking. When you congratulate yourself on his speech being ended, it begins again; like a patent gun that discharges nine times for

\* The word *mandrake*, mentioned in Genesis xxx. 14, cannot, I think, refer to the *atropa mandragora*, the root of which is a strong poison; but this is uncertain.

one loading. His eloquence is a leprosy more pestilent than that of Naaman the Syrian. It is an itch which must be cured rather by Mars than Mercury, though it may bring him at last into a course of sulphur. He is a true renegade; he abjures allegiance to his Prince, to raise himself upon his ruin. He is a rebel of antiquity; for his family were Præadamites, whereof Lucifer was the founder. He endeavours to raise himself as a school-boy does his kite, by pulling against the wind. He points out pretended flaws in the constitution, as sharp housewives show cracks in a pipkin, that he may get it more easily into his own hands. He would repair it as knavish

tinkers mend kettles, for the increase of their own custom, by enlarging a fracture, or working two for one. He is the diseased part of the body politic, in which all its bad humours are gathered; and when he is lanced, they are all let out, and the body is sound again. He is like the walls of the Royal Exchange, hung with every man's business, public and private; and, like them, he promises more than can be performed. His tongue is like a mail-coach; the less weight it carries, the quicker it goes; but, unlike a mail-coach, it runs without a guard. He delights in nothing so much as confusion, and, like a porpoise, he always tumbles before a storm."



SOURCE OF THE SHANNON.

MR. EDITOR—In these times, when the navigation and improvement of the river Shannon occupy so much of the public attention, perhaps a few words relative to the source of that noble river may not be uninteresting; and if the following description, and the small map that accompanies it, prove worthy of a place in your highly useful and national periodical, it will fully compensate me for any little trouble I have been at.

It is generally represented in Irish geography that this river rises in Lough Allen, county of Leitrim; but it is actually nine English miles farther north. It rises in the county of Cavan, barony of Tallyhaw, parish of Templeport, townland of Derrylaghan, at the head of a wild district called Glangavelin, and in the valley between Culcagh and Lurganacallagh mountains, close to the base of the former. The source or spring is of a circular form, about fifty feet in diameter, called the Shannon Pot, or more generally Leigmonshena. It boils up in the centre, and a continued stream flows from it, about eight feet wide and two deep in the driest season, and runs about four miles per hour. In rainy weather the flow of water is so much increased, that its banks and all the low ground in its immediate vicinity are overflowed. There are numerous caverns and clefts on the top and sides of Culcagh mountain, which receive the rain water; and from the circumstance of no streams descending this side of the mountain, I conclude that the drainage of this vast moun-

tain, combined to its subterranean springs, here find an outlet, and give birth to this river. Two miles from its source, it is joined by the Ovenmore or Big River, (as will be seen by reference to the map.\*) After winding its way through the valley, and collecting its tributary branches, it falls into Lough Allen about nine miles south of its source, having in this short course swelled to a considerable river, from fifty to sixty yards wide, varying in depth from five to ten feet. I have given on the map the height of the source, also the summit of Culcagh above the sea, which will show how comparatively low the former is. The principal falls are before it leaves the county of Cavan, having in the distance of six miles a fall of above one hundred and seventy feet; so that, from Kerry Head to its source, a distance of two hundred and twenty miles, it is capable of improvement for the purposes of navigation.

W. S.

Killesandra, March 1836.

MICK DONNOVAN.

A SKETCH OF IRISH LIFE.

"Now, ye great spalpeen of a bane stalk ye, can't ye see the road straight afore ye, and not be a knocking yere shins agin the bolders any how? Will ye never find the

\* That portion of the Shannon in the county of Leitrim is not to scale, having been put in from remembrance.